

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 COA-02 PM-07 SCI-06 COME-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15

PRS-01 SPC-03 INT-08 NSF-04 DRC-01 SS-20 L-03 SSO-00

/109 W

----- 002914

R 010921Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7368

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCLR TGEN BM PFOR

SUBJECT: SCRIPPS INSTITUTION RESEARCH VESSEL VISIT REJECTED

REF: A. RANGOON 2538 NOTAL

B. RANGOON 2526 NOTAL

C. STATE 214078

1. SUMMARY: GUB REVERSED POSITION OVERNIGHT IN GRANTING, THEN WITHDRAWING, PERMISSION FOR PORT CALL BY OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH VESSEL THOMAS WASHINGTON. NO REASON GIVEN, BUT WE SUSPECT CHANGE OF POSITION MAY BE RELATED TO ENTRY OF U.S. TASK FORCE INTO INDIAN OCEAN. END SUMMARY.

2. FOL IS BACKGROUND OF GUB DENIAL OF PORT CLEARANCE AND PERMISSION TO OPERATE IN TERRITORIAL WATERS TO RESEARCH VESSEL THOMAS WASHINGTON. IT MAY BE SHARED IN CONFIDENCE WITH SCRIPPS INSTITUTION.

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EM VESSEL WAS SCHEDULED CALL AT RANGOON OCTOBER 31. CLEARANCE REQUEST WAS SENT TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) SEPTEMBER 21. AFTER SOME INTERNAL BUCK-PASSING, MATTER WAS REFERRED TO MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE, HOME AFFAIRS, MINES, AND TRANSPORT. INTERIM REPORT ON THEIR DELIBERATIONS WAS CONVEYED TO US INFORMALLY BY MFA OFFICIAL OCTOBER 29. SHE STATED THAT DEFENSE MINISTRY HAD OBJECTED TO ENTRY OF VESSEL INTO TERRITORIAL WATERS, IMPLYING THAT OTHER AGENCIES CONCERNED HAD NO OBJECTION. SHE EXPLAINED GUB SINCE 1962 HAS RECEIVED SEVERAL SUCH REQUESTS, MOST RECENTLY FROM SOVIET UNION, AND HAS REJECTED ALL; INDEED, SHE IMPLIED, SCRIPPS REQUEST WAS FIRST EVER TO RECEIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. DENIAL OF PERMISSION THUS REPRESENTS CONTINUATION OF GENERAL POLICY RATHER THAN ANY SPECIFIC OBJECTION TO SCRIPPS OR TO THOMAS WASHINGTON RESEARCH PROGRAM.

4. MFA OFFICIAL ALSO STATED QUESTION OF PORT CALL NOT YET RESOLVED (BECAUSE GUB WAS UNSURE WHETHER VESSEL WOULD STILL WISH TO CALL AT RANGOON), BUT THAT IT NOT RPT NOT LIKELY THERE WOULD BE ANY OBJECTION. THE POSITION WAS CONFIRMED TO US FOLLOWING DAY. MFA OFFICIAL STATED MINISTRY OF DEFENSE NOW HAD NO OBJECTION TO CALL AND THAT CONSEQUENTLY VISIT SHOULD BE HANDLED LIKE THAT OF ANY PRIVATE MERCHANT VESSEL. AT CONCLUSION OF CONVERSATION, SHE MENTIONED, WITHOUT MAKING ANY SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT ON, ENTRY OF U.S. TASK FORCE INTO INDIAN OCEAN, JUST REPORTED BY NEWS BROADCASTS.

5. MFA TELEPHONED AT 0900 LOCAL OCTOBER 31 TO CONVEY WORD THAT PORT CLEARANCE REVOKED. NO REASON GIVEN. EMBOFF CALLED AT MFA IN AFTERNOON TO RECEIVE NOTE COMMUNICATING GUB DECISION. SAME MFA OFFICIAL PROFESSED TO BE UNINFORMED AS TO REASON WHY PERMISSION WAS REVOKED BUT ADDED, "I DO NOT KNOW WHAT CHANGE IN INTERNATIONAL SITUATION, WHICH IS NOW RPT NOW VERY DELICATE, COULD HAVE LED TO SUCH A DECISION."

6. FROM FOREGOING, WE SURMISE THAT CHANGE IN GUB DECISION MAY HAVE BEEN MOTIVATED BY NEWS OF U.S. TASK FORCE ENTERING INDIAN OCEAN. IF SO, GUB'S REVERSAL OF POSITION WOULD BE IN LINE WITH GUB DESIRE TO REMAIN UNINVOLVED WHEN TENSIONS ARISE BETWEEN GREAT POWERS.

MARTIN

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 01 NOV 1973
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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30 JUN 2005

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